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REMARKS

In the Office Action dated November 1, 2004, claims 1-20 are pending. Claims 1, 15, and 19 are independent claims from which all other claims depend therefrom. Claims 3 and 16 are herein canceled. Claims 21 and 22 are newly added. Claims 1, 4, 15, and 19 have been amended.

Paragraphs [0034] and [0045] have been amended to provide additional description for the coupling joint of Figure 1 and the dashboard housing of Figure 3.

Figures 1 and 3 have been amended to include numerical references for components mentioned in paragraphs [0034] and [0045]. Corrected drawing sheets are submitted herewith.

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Godwin (U.S. Patent No. 3,861,281).

Claim 1 recites an air delivery system for a vehicle that includes an air plenum, a coupling joint, a vent, and an air transfer device. The air transfer device passes air through the air plenum, the coupling joint, and the vent. The vent resides between and is hidden, with respect to a line-of-sight of a vehicle occupant in a normal seated position, by overlapping sections of a vehicle housing when in a normal operating state.

Godwin discloses an adjustable grille 16 that normally projects into the path of an occupant. The adjustable grille 16 is adapted to withdraw within a dashboard 12 upon an impact with a vehicle occupant such as during a vehicle collision or an emergency situation. The adjustable grill 16 includes a main frame 24 that is pivotally mounted within a housing 26. Upon impact the main frame 24 pivots within the housing 26 such that the force of the grille 16 against the occupant is minor.

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Applicants submit that Godwin fails to teach or suggest an air vent that resides between overlapping sections of a vehicle housing and that is hidden, with respect to a line-of-sight of a vehicle occupant in a normal seated position when in a normal operating state. During normal vehicle operation the main frame 24 of Godwin projects into the vehicle cabin to direct air upwardly at the occupant. Applicants submit that at least during normal operation the main frame 24 is within the line-of-sight of the occupant and is therefore not hidden. This can be seen in Figure 1 of Godwin.

In order for a reference to anticipate a claim the reference must teach or suggest each and every element of that claim, see MPEP 2131 and *Verdegrad Bros. V. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628. Thus, since each and every element of claim 1 is not taught or suggested by Godwin, Applicants submit that claim 1 is novel, nonobvious, and is in a condition for allowance. Also, since claims 2, 4-14, and 21-22 depend from claim 1, they are also novel, nonobvious, and are in a condition for allowance for at least the same reasons.

Claim 15 recites a dashboard assembly for a vehicle. The assembly includes a lower housing and an upper housing that overlaps the lower housing. An air plenum resides between the lower housing and the upper housing. A coupling joint is coupled to the air plenum. An air transfer device passes air through the air plenum, the coupling joint, and into an interior cabin of the vehicle. The upper housing overlaps the lower housing to hide an air outlet of the air plenum and the coupling joint, with respect to a normally seated occupant line-of-sight, when in a normal operating state.

Similarly as that of claim 1, Applicants submit that Godwin fails to teach or suggest the claim 15 limitations of an upper housing that overlaps a lower housing to hide an air outlet of an air plenum and a coupling joint, with respect to a normally seated occupant line-of-sight, when in a normal operating state. Thus, claim 15 and claims 16-18, which depend from claim 15, are also novel, nonobvious, and are in a condition for allowance.

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Claim 19 recites a vehicle interior assembly that includes an air plenum with an air outlet, from which air enters an interior vehicle cabin, and a dashboard. The dashboard has an upper housing that overlaps a lower housing to hide the air outlet during a normal operating state. A coupling joint is coupled to the air plenum and resides between the upper housing and the lower housing. An air transfer device passes air through the air plenum, the coupling joint, and into the interior vehicle cabin.

Similarly as that of claims 1 and 15, Applicants further submit that Godwin fails to teach or suggest a dashboard with an upper housing that overlaps a lower housing to hide the air outlet during a normal operating state. Thus, claim 19 and claim 20, which depends from claim 19, are also novel, nonobvious, and are in a condition for allowance.

In addition, Applicants submit that it is unclear from Godwin that the main frame 24 is hidden even when withdrawn. Nowhere in Godwin is it stated that the main frame 24 is hidden or that the main frame 24 is out of the line-of-sight of a vehicle occupant. Godwin simply states that the main frame 24 is withdrawn, in other words, not projecting towards the occupant to the same extent. It appears from Figure 1 of Godwin that the main frame 24 is within the line-of-sight of the vehicle occupant when withdrawn and thus is not hidden.

Moreover, although the main frame 24 of Godwin when withdrawn has a front receding surface that is angled similar to the receding surface 14 of the dashboard 12, the inclusion of a receding surface in and of itself does not imply that the main frame 24 or any other object is hidden. Applicants submit that many dashboard components known in the art have receding surfaces, which are in the line-of-sight of a vehicle occupant. For example, the front surfaces of dashboard-mounted glove compartments are often receding, but yet viewable by a vehicle occupant. The receding surfaces are typically as such to provide additional interior cabin space and are not necessarily oriented to be hidden.

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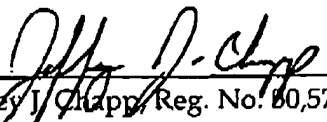
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In light of the amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the rejections are now overcome. The Applicants have added no new matter to the application by these amendments. The application is now in condition for allowance and expeditious notice thereof is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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